

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence City Hall – Room 306

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

December 22, 2014

Open Session

Mr. Tsonos, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Members Present: Jessica Beauchaine, Nathan Cahoon, Anthony Ferreira, Joel Monteiro, Charles Tsonos. Also Present: Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, Robert Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

A motion was made by Mr. Cahoon that the Committee convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing: Personnel – R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (1) (Mr. Tsonos read the citation). Motion seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine to return to public session and to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Report Executive Session Votes – No votes taken.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.

Action Items

Awarding of Bid - Wheelchair Lift Replacement – Riverside Middle School – Superintendent Mercer recommended that the bid be awarded to Garaventa USA Inc. in the amount of \$32,735.11. Mr. Cahoon asked if we have the option to not paint it red in order to take the price down. Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve the award less the extra cost of the red paint; seconded by Mr. Ferrerira. Discussion: Mr. Ferreira wanted to make sure it would have a finish on it. Vote 5-0.

Expand the Role of the Project Manager – Superintendent Mercer requested that the School Committee approve this just until Mr. Catelli comes back to oversee major projects such as the doors and the Orlo Fire Alarm; she would like this project manager to oversee the lift and additional projects as she sees fit.

Mr. Cahoon – all of our Stage II construction would be under a Project Manager according to a directive from RIDE; those projects approved would be part of it, but not lifts; asked what the scope of the project would be. Kim Mercer – an hour or two per week for projects we have

not started yet.

Mr. Ferreira – What projects would we need him on; \$32,000 – company to do the lift is qualified; what would the project manager do? He is against this even if bringing in an hour or two a week; why pay someone \$300-400 to oversee this reputable company; too much oversight at top, not enough at the bottom. Whiteknact – roughly \$1 million dollar project; pleased across the board with it; why do we need this now for a \$30,000 project; he would have nothing to do with it; use the people we have on staff; if he had a list of projects; he will vote no on this; this is a serious issue why we would hire anyone without knowing what they are going to be doing.

Mr. Tsonos – how will we fill the void; this is not the Superintendent's job; we should identify people who can fill the void. Mr. Ferreira – how many jobs will we hire him for; what will he be involved in.

Mr. Tsonos – Facilities Committee will identify who will do what and who is responsible for it.

Mr. Ferreira – what changed since we hired him; why not information in front of School Committee with reasons to bring him on; brought two people; one up and one down; no information or research on it; just to fill a slot?

Kim Mercer – withdrew the request; she will reorganize Facilities Department.

Mr. Monteiro – need to discuss roles and responsibilities; individual

job duties.

Kim Mercer – he would be responsible for working with the Fire Marshall, etc. SMMA not involved in lifts.

Ms. Beauchaine – there is a lot going on with facilities; if the Superintendent has extra need to add a project manager, we need to look at what we have; if too much on Superintendent's plate, need to have a discussion. Kim Mercer – paperwork, hearings, etc. project manager could do that paperwork.

Mr. Monteiro – understands what goes on in district; Superintendent should not be doing this type of work at that level; need to sit down and have a realistic idea of roles; clear up laundry pile, etc. Mr. Barilla's daily duties on top of the schedule.

The Superintendent stated that she would pass/withdrew her request on this request today.

Discussion Items

Snow Removal – there are concerns about equipment; how it is; stock on belts, pumps, etc. School

Committee was sent an email that all was OK, but mechanic doing 120% with belts, etc.

It is a question of who is telling who; what about the work orders. Mr.

Tsonos asked what the roles of people in the department are; it speaks to that.

Kim Mercer – sander and dump truck down; we have old equipment and are in need of replacements; some money in budget; should address replacement; some last year; old and rusty equipment.

Whiteknact Roof – Mr. Ferreira spent 3 ½ hours Saturday with Barhy; had a positive meeting; three leaks ongoing; pulled off patches; flooded for one hour; Mr. Barilla was there and we flooded the area around the chimney; water poured in; there is no cap and a 20” hole with no cover; roofer would try to make a cover this week and put it up there so we can sign off on paying the bill; we can wait one rain storm and get maintenance to check ceiling tiles. With the rain coming in, we will be able to see if it is leaking; put four new tiles up, then after heavy rain we will see if leaking.

Changing Light Bulbs – Kim Mercer explained that the program provided light bulbs at no cost; we have to switch them out; there will be an inspection in 90 days; we received 16,000 bulbs at the end of September free of charge; new T8's 28W; combination of 28's and 32's; company told her that switching could realize a savings of \$2-4/per year on each bulb; total savings between \$32,000 and \$64,000. Bulbs three to five years old; have to refurbish whole district, minimum \$32,000.

Mr. Monteiro – are we going to deduct savings from Johnson

Controls numbers; he wants to make sure they do not get credit for savings.

Kim Mercer – report received today; they want to come to the School Committee meeting.

Kim Mercer – Ed's directive was to do sections at a time in buildings; every single light bulk will be changed.

Ms. Beauchaine- are we paying them overtime or are they rushing other stuff to do that work; is it being overseen or packed in with daily work.

Mr. Tsonos – regular job plus this work; is it overtime.

Kim Mercer will check with Mr. Barilla.

Mr. Ferreira said he has been in three schools; there are cases of T28 light bulbs with green caps replacing 32's that are working fine and replacing with 28T General Electric; called Mr. Tsonos after he called in paperwork; how much does it cost us to change these perfectly good light bulbs; only Walmart and Sam's Club does that; GE is against it; he spoke to National Grid and someone at state level. Why did the School Committee let this happen; we are taking out bulbs and replacing bulbs; there was no analysis before project started, about 120-140 man hours in one school; how did project get so out of control; other consequences; how to pack up light bulbs and return them; does anyone have cost on all that.

Mr. Cahoon – does not have the answer; disheartening; not fair to beat up on Superintendent and administrators coming to the meeting

rather than the person who would have the answers; who is taking care of this during Mr. Catelli's absence. He felt that the larger issue is the Budget Commission consolidation with one person for city and schools and now he is out. We need our own people; we are looking at an increase in our budget and then level funded next three years; we need to figure this out exactly; how much for a project manager and when needed; cost of disposing of the light bulbs.

Mr. Tsonos– determine what we have to work with and go from there; he does not have a sense of who is available to do what.

Mr. Ferreira – we have energy/security in this room; bulbs received in September and a program of this magnitude did not before the School Committee first; person in room should have gone through this; when are we going to hold people responsible; it is about being held accountable, not beating up people; we need to discuss this at next meeting with City Council; keep hearing about the Budget Commission; notify City Council to start discussing this; the person involved with Johnson Controls could have had answers; custodians asking how will we get this work done. Mr. Ferreira hearing from professionals that we should not have done this program; serious issues with what is being told to the Superintendent.

Mr. Tsonos – should go to City Council, but need a list first.

Ms. Beauchaine does not think the Superintendent should be involved in light bulbs; need to hold someone accountable.

Mr. Ferreira— staff in trenches thrown another job; then couple thousand man hours; just get it done; he said he told them to refuse to do it; program should have come before the School Committee first.

Kim Mercer - can put some more people on overtime to complete it.

Mr. Tsonos – next agenda, add Oldham School achievement.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to adjourn at 7:52PM, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Nathan Cahoon, Clerk of the Committee